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WOW! WHAT A WEEKEND!

Turmoil grows from AAA Split (below); Huge WWA cards (p. 6)

It has been a wild and crazy week and weekend in Mexico lucha libre as what at first appeared to be a small skirmish with a small faction of wrestlers splitting off from the EMLL has now grown into a full-blown war.

When we last checked in on things, that being last Tuesday, May 12, 1992, 30 "full-sized" and 24 "midget" wrestlers had left Mexico's largest wrestling promotion, the EMLL, and formed their own company, the AAA, now commonly referred to as "Triple A."

Here, as best I have it, is a chronology of events to date. On Wednesday, April 22, 1992, Antonio Pena, vice-president of the EMLL, walked into the fourth floor offices at la Arena Mexico of his boss, president Francisco "Paco" Alonso Lutherroth, and offered his resignation. It appears Pena had been planning to either try to "assume control" of the EMLL by essentially running its day-to-day operations or to outright take over. Alonso became aware of Pena's tactics and the two had meetings to try to iron things out. It was at one of these meetings, on the 22nd, where Pena offered to resign.

At first, Alonso did not accept the resignation. Though I do not have all the facts I would like, it appears what Alonso did was put two and two together and figure that once Pena resigned, Pena would try to start a new wrestling promotion in competition with Alonso, and that Pena would need wrestlers for that new promotion. Alonso immediately contacted his main wrestlers and tried to determine where lay their loyalties. In several cases, notably with Atlantis, el Rayo de Jalisco junior, and Casanova el Vampiro Canadiense, Alonso essentially "forced" them to sign current and presumably long-term employment contracts with the EMLL. Now the next sentence is a conclusion I have come to but I believe it strongly: I do not doubt for a second that Alonso did try very very hard to work things out with Pena; I bet he knew what we are finding out already, that Pena is going to be far tougher competition than people would think at first blush. I further believe Alonso knew that Pena's leaving would create a war and a lot of instability and Paco did not want that to happen if at all possible.

But it did. Over the course of the next week, things simply did not improve between Pena and Alonso. At another meeting, on Wednesday, April 29, 1992, Pena offered his formal resignation from the company, and it was accepted. Immediately Pena went to work, as everyone had suspected, trying to start a new wrestling company. This would necessitate efforts in three areas: a) getting wrestlers to wrestle; b) getting arenas in which his wrestlers could wrestle; and c) getting television to show his product. During the next eight days, Pena concentrated his efforts in those areas.

It should be mentioned here that Alonso suspected something was up for some time and *knew* something was up since about April 1, 1992. One of Pena's two or three most trusted wrestlers is Octagon. Alonso had taken Octagon off the road since around April 1, 1992. The cover story was the Octagon had suffered a "small fracture in his right hand." What was actually happening was that in the locker rooms, Octagon was recruiting wrestlers to join Pena's new promotion. I do not know for sure but also suspect that that is why Pena's other closest wrestler, Konnan el Barbaro, as well as Konnan's close friend Pedro "el Perro" Aguayo, were not booked in Mexico City but instead sent out to work "in the boondocks" since around April 1st.

Pena continued talking with various wrestlers and having some success, but he was stymied when it came to negotiating with arenas. It appears that the EMLL and the UWA have either formal contracts or informal agreements to exclusively run the arenas in which they do promote. Pena was not able to get any arenas near Mexico City to rent to him. It is known that he has been negotiating with the management of Mexico's largest indoor arena, el Palacio de los Deportes. This is the arena the UWA got into back in the mid 1970's when it began as a wrestling company, and was the site of such legendary matches as the first UWA World Heavyweight Title change, when Canek pinned Lou Thesz in 1978. Recently, Alonso and Carlos Maynes, president of the UWA, had tried to rent "el Palacio," which seats just slightly over 20,000 people, to run a show to aid relief efforts for victims of the tragic explosions in Guadalajara, Jalisco. For reasons of which I am not clear, Alonso and Maynes were turned down (the show will instead be held May 19th at the much smaller la Arena Coliseo). It is known, and was printed in Japanese wrestling magazine *Weekly Gong* that Pena is trying to win exclusive rights to that arena, and to a smaller arena called "el Pavilion Azteca" in Mexico City itself.

Pena felt comfortable enough with his progress to formally announce the birth of his wrestling company. At 9:30 am, at Salon Constelaciones A at the Hotel Nikko (how ironic) in Mexico City, on Thursday, May 7, 1992, Pena announced the formation of the Triple A. He introduced the Mexico City-based wrestlers who accompanied him at the press conference. They were: Tony Arce (whom I missed last week), el Angel Azteca, Octagon, el Justiciero, Aguayo, Fuerza Guerrera, Universo Dos Mil, el Hijo del Santo, The Blue Panther, el Fantasma, Konnan, el Justiciero, el Pequeno Cobarde, el Piratita Morgan, and la Aguilita Solitaria. The other Mexico City-based wrestlers, whose names most of you would recognize, who jumped (but did not attend the press conference) were Rocco Valente, el Vulcano, la Mascara Sagrada, la Mascarita Sagrada, Cien Caras, Mascara Ano Dos Mil, Atila junior, and Juventud Guerrera. The rest of the wrestlers to join the AAA are based mostly out of the city of Puebla: Doctor Maldad, Mister Maldad, la Amenaza Elegante, el Inmortal, Superbow!, Quarterback, el Magnate, la Parca, Ice Killer, Reptil, Kid Boxer, Bleda, and el Picudo.

The case of wrestler "el Justiciero" is a most intriguing one. He was fired by the EMLL and his license was revoked by the SNL (wrestlers' union) last October for attempting to take the EMLL boys and either form a new union or take over the old one. Well, wouldn't you know it, now it has happened. Led by el Justiciero and Fuerza Guerrera, the wrestlers who have jumped to the Triple A have voluntarily resigned from the SNL. It is believed that they will form a new union. The SNL is a sub-union of the Mexican equivalent of the Teamsters' Union and it is believed this new wrestlers' union will become a sub-union to some other syndicate. There have been tons of rumors and even a printed story suggesting the SNL is "mafia-influenced" and does not work strictly in the best interests of its members; I have even had a wrestler tell me that. This is an absolutely crucial part of the ongoing story. I can not see the triple A being a non-union shop in heavily socialistic Mexico. But the "split in the brotherhood" that a second union would cause could really affect morale at all of the promotions. In fact, it may be one of the reasons that one of Pena's key acquisitions, el Hijo del Santo, is wavering or having second thoughts about switching sides.

Well, Pena had contracted some wrestlers to wrestle and some arenas in which to wrestle, and was negotiating with more wrestlers (e. g., Javier "el Gusano" Llanes, one of my favorites) and arenas ("el Palacio"). Now what he needed was a way to expose them and his new product to the public. Pena's original role in the EMLL and his most basic talent therein was as a television producer. I have assumed that if Pena got a television outlet and the resources he needed, he would put out a super product. It has often been said of Pena, and Konnan as a right-hand man, that they get many of their television ideas from viewing the WWF. I personally believe that there is much to be said of the WWF's television in terms of graphics and production values, even if the on-air wrestling is terrible and the end result is "empty calories," good looking on the outside but nothing fulfilling inside.

However, Alonso, as president of the EMLL, had (and still does have) a valid contract with Televisa, Mexico's largest network, to show the weekly EMLL television show (the same one seen on Galavision in the USA). It appears obvious, as I thought at first when this story broke two weeks ago, that Pena and Televisa are very tight and, you could say, "in bed together." It is a fact that Pena negotiated the rights to put EMLL on Televisa beginning last August. It is a fact that Pena essentially did not tell Alonso he was doing this. It is a fact that as head of the EMLL television product, Pena has had the daily contact with Televisa for the last four-plus years. I presume, and it's very logical, that Pena sounded out Televisa before he split off from Alonso, getting Televisa's opinions (both legal and personal) as to whether Pena could get a television slot.

Without going into too much detail, there are five Mexican networks. Four of them are owned by Televisa, and one by Imevision. In Mexico City, Televisa broadcasts channels 2, 4, 7, and 9, and Imevision, channel 13. Televisa's stations are the four-most watched; channel 2 is first, then channel 4, 9, and 7. (This multiple ownership is not new. BBC in England owns several channels today and NBC in the US owned two before one "spun off" to eventually become ABC). The EMLL had a time slot on channel 2 on Sundays from noon to 2:00 pm and on channel 9 from 5:00 to 7:00 pm local times. (The UWA has its show Saturday afternoons at 2:30 pm to 4:00 pm on channel 13.)

Now, how Pena did it, I still do not know. Somehow, he managed to get access to the Saturday night slot, and to everyone's great surprise, ran his first show and then broadcast it throughout Mexico (and on satellite) this past weekend. The show was held Friday, May 15, 1992, at "el Auditorio Municipal Benito Juarez" in the city of Veracruz, capital of the state of the same name in Mexico. The show began at 8:30 pm local time and probably ended around 11:00 pm. Pena and a full Televisa crew taped the show, went back to Mexico City, did whatever they had to do to it, and broadcast it on channel 9 at 4:00 pm. I should add that the graphics, introduction, etc., were all brand new, and thanks to David Scherer or Marmora, New Jersey, whose opinion I trust, said to be bright, modern, and classy. Furthermore, the wrestling itself was said to be spectacular. When Pena worked for the EMLL, and he contracted to bring new talent in, he was famous for examining the prospective employee's work rate first and foremost in his decision-making process about whether to hire the wrestler. When you examine the wrestlers who have joined Pena, you can see that once again Pena is trying to draft the best *workers* for his company, a tactic that is not only to be commended in and of itself but may actually end up making the Triple A the fans' favorite promotion, and sooner than you might think, too.

As I was saying, the show was said to be spectacular. No doubt that everybody had their working (and charisma) shoes on to make a good initial impression. Here is David Scherer's report of the first (and if you are reading this before 10:30 pm EDT, Friday, May 22nd, the only so far) Triple A card:

* The first match was a parejas match in which Dave missed the participants.

* The second match saw the super-mini-estrellas in action. La Mascarita Sagrada, Octagoncito, and I believe el Justiciero defeated Jerrito Estrada, el Espectrito junior, and el Pequeno ? two falls to one. The tecnicos were reported to be unusually spectacular (which is saying something) with dives from the top rope corner turnbuckle outside of the ring, so I can not wait to see this one.

* Vandal Drummond's favorite trio team, los Nuevos Destructores del Ring (Tony Arce, his brother Rocco Valente, and el Vulcano) defeated the Puebla-based team of Winners, el Giro, and el Colorado in three falls. Winners, el Giro, and el Colorado are all very small but said to be very good. El Giro is a psychedelic gyroscope gimmick and el Colorado is some sort of nature gimmick. This match was said to have been real good.

* Octagon, el Justiciero, and el Angel Azteca lost to Fuerza Guerrera, Ice Killer, and la Parca in three falls. Ice Killer is a hockey gimmick and la Parca is a grim reaper gimmick, a la Guatemala's most famous rudo, Skeletor. Once again, this was said to be spectacular. During the match, the new parejas team of Quarterback and Superbowl were shown at ringside. The finish saw all three rudos in the ring at once, pounding away on Octagon. Octagon made a comeback and started whaling away at all his opponents and everybody he saw. Well, here el Angel Azteca got in the ring and accidentally Octagon hit Azteca. The rudos quickly took advantage of the confusion to score the victory, then urged Azteca to "get Octagon back" for punching him. After some hesitation, Azteca did start getting into it with Octagon. Suddenly, the rudos from the main event appeared and all six rudos started attacking Octagon and Azteca, who had to be saved by the main event tecnicos, coming down the aisle like charge of the light brigade.

* And, speaking of the main event, tecnicos Pedro "el Perro" Aguayo, el Fantasma, and la Mascara Sagrada defeated Mexican National Trios Champions rudos los Hermanos Dinamita (Cien Caras, Mascara Ano Dos Mil, and Universo Dos Mil) in two straight falls. The finish of the second fall saw the rudos disqualified for two reasons. One, one of the masked "Dos Mils" gave el Fantasma a foul, and two, los rudos brought a chair into the ring and cracked both el Fantasma and el Perro Aguayo over the head with the chair. This was said not to be so much a spectacular match as much as a feud match. I guess it's hard to be spectacular with Cien Caras at 42, Aguayo at 46, and el Fantasma even older. I expected Konnan to be in this match, but he is proclaiming himself as "International Booking/Talent Co-Ordinator" and may have more of an off-camera role than I had expected. I would expect him to work in the ring some, though, as the Triple A needs every heavyweight body it can get for the top of its cards.

This show aired on satellite Morelos One, channel nine, XH-TV, and was a live feed from XEQ-TV, Mexico City's channel nine. It aired at Saturday night at 7:00 pm EDT for those of you with satellite dishes. The very same satellite and channel broadcast the Sunday EMLL show at 2:00 pm EDT, broadcasting a live feed from Mexico City's channel 2. The show that was taped at la Arena Coliseo on Friday night, May 15, 1992, aired without a hitch on Sunday, May 17, 1992, in Mexico City and on satellite; I presume it is the show that we will see in the USA on Galavision on Sunday, May 24, 1992, at 7:30 pm EDT. By the way, Doctor Alfonso Morales and Artutor Rivera announced the Triple A card, while Miguel Linares and Raul Sarmiento did the EMLL card. Here is what will air:

- 1) El Guerrero Maya, el Guerrero del Futuro, and Damian, el Guerrero versus Iga, Koga, and el Guerrero Samurai II.
- 2) America, Anibal, and el Filoso versus Kung Fu, el Comando Ruso, and el Supremo I.
- 3) Salomon Grondy, Ciclón Ramirez, and The Blue Demon junior versus el Felino, el Egipcio, and Jerry Estrada.
- 4) Atlantis, Lizmark, and el Rayo de Jalisco junior versus los Nuevos Infernales (MS1, el Satanico & el Pirata Morgan.)

Also, in a very puzzling story, a new "Cartometro" Popularity poll aired on this 5/17 show. What was amazing was what it said: Top Tecnicos: 1) Octagon, 2) Atlantis; Top Rudos: 1) The Blue Panther, 2) Pierroth junior; Top Luchadoras: 1) Martha "la Aplandora" Villalobos, 2) Lady Apache; Top Super-Mini-Estrellas: 1) la Mascarita Sagrada, 2) Octagoncito; and Top Trios: 1) Los Mosqueteros del Diablo, los Brazos (el Brazo, el Brazo de Oro, and el Brazo de Plata), 2) los Nuevos Destructores del Ring (Tony Arce, Rocco Valente, and el Vulcano). This is amazing because of the 14 wrestlers mentioned in the poll, 7 of the 10 men are with the Triple A! By the way, I should mention a not about the lady wrestlers. They are separate from any one promotion. Just as Fabulous Moolah booked much of women's wrestling in the US autonomously in the 1960s-1980s, in Mexico today Lola "Dinamita" Gonzales books virtually all of las luchadoras. The women are apart from all sides in this split and are booked separately, and will continue to work with each promotion as asked. In the last couple of years, Paco Alonso seems to have shown far more interest in booking ladies' wrestling than has Carlos Maynes or Antonio Pena. Perhaps it is because Alonso's niece Zuleyma (Elvia Fragozo Alonso) is a top wrestler (currently she is the UWA Womens' World Champion) but it could just as easily be a straight business decision on Paco's part.

Much of the speculation about the Triple A promotion both in Mexico and in the USA centers on the talent it may yet acquire. There is some speculation that el Hijo del Santo may not jump after all, while there is considerably talk that Javier "el Gusano" Llanes may yet go to the Triple A. But the name around which most of the speculation revolves (as it has for two-plus years) is that of Jose "el Negro" Casas.

Negro Casas (Jose "Pepito" Casas Ruiz) is generally reputed to be the best luchador in Mexico today. His two wrestling brothers, Canelo Casas (Erick Casas Ruiz) and el Felino (ex-"Baby Casas") are considered near the top in the game as well. Negro and his brothers would be a valuable acquisition for any wrestling promotion in the world, even with their admittedly small size. For some time now, rumors have circulated that Negro Casas would soon "desert the sinking ship" of the floundering UWA promotion and go to the now-larger and now-more-successful EMLL. Towards that end, the EMLL has admittedly brought in Canelo Casas and el Felino, as well as Negro Casas's girlfriend, luchadora Xochitl Hamada. They have accentuated the position of the family's patriarch, Pepe Casas (Jose Casas), augmenting his daily duties as head lucha libre trainer at the official EMLL gym on the fifth floor of la Arena Mexico by assigning him a visible position on-camera as a babyface referee at the television taping cards. While each of these "personnel moves" regarding members of the Casas family is more than justifiable in and of itself, the "means to an end" cliché very definitely applies here, as each move has been made with an eye towards eventually hiring Negro Casas.

Where will Negro go? Each promotion seems to think that it will wind up with his services. He is still as of this moment working UWA cards and wearing the crown as UWA World Middleweight Champion. The CMLL is confident that by employing his whole "family," that it will get Negro Casas's services. And the Triple A feels it has the inside track based on the feelings expressed amongst all sides in recent negotiations to bring Casas in to the EMLL (which was supposed to finally happen with a tentative start date of May 22nd, the date the EMLL begins its spring tour of la Arena Mexico.) In fact, Triple A personnel are privately claiming that they have Negro, Canelo, and Felino set to jump. I personally do not know, and I would not bet, but if you put a gun to my head, I would guess that Negro Casas would eventually jump, but to the CMLL; and that when he jumped, he would take current parejas partner el Espanto junior with him.

And what if the arenas? Can Triple A get a Mexico City outlet to run? And what of television? Can the Triple A keep its slot and, if so, can they even force the EMLL out of the Sunday slot and maybe off Televisa altogether? I suspect that the answer to all of these questions revolves around Televisa. I do not know this as an absolute fact but it has been suggested to me personally and in magazines that Televisa invested in the EMLL as it upgraded its television product in 1991 and as it formed its CMLL "subsidiary." I know that Antonio Pena will need some sort of revenue source other than one house show a week to pay the 32-60 or more wrestlers he now has under contract. My best guess, and it is an educated one, is that Televisa is the seed money behind the Triple A. That would explain a lot of things, most notably how the Triple A could get on television so quickly when Televisa already has a wrestling show to air. In the case of the triple A, Televisa would now be co- or part-owner and would be investing in the start-up of their own television series, with a man they trust and have worked with for years (Pena) at the helm. That scenario sure does make a lot of sense, and would put a lot of pieces in the puzzle into an exact fit.

And, I have learned, based on the Weekly Gong article, that the "split" in promotions explains the finish that on the surface was almost indefensible of the match in Tokyo between el Satanico and Yoshihiro Asai, both of whom are in Paco Alonso's camp in this split. If you remember, on April 18, 1992, at The Tokyo Coliseum in Tokyo, el Satanico had successfully defended the NWA World Light Heavyweight Championship by defeating Saigon Dragon el Ultimo Dragon (Asai) via count out of the ring. As it turns out, the Dragon costume, mask, and name are all copyrighted and owned by Antonio Pena. It seems that Paco Alonso was legitimately afraid that if "el Ultimo Dragon" won the NWA belt, that when the split in promotions came, that Pena could simply put any wrestler (Mexican or Japanese) under the "el Ultimo Dragon" mask, costume, and gimmick, and present that wrestler as the champion. And, as I have said before, the NWA World Light Heavyweight Championship and that Belt are the most traditionally treasured titles in the Lutherroth family; indeed, who would be booked as champion was part of the controversy that led to the UWA splitting off from the EMLL in late 1974. No way was Paco Alonso going to give up his family's most recognizable and treasured symbol to a rival promotion. I would not at all be surprised, however, to see Asai eventually win that title. It may be as Dragon (Alonso and/or Asai and/or SWS in Japan would almost certainly have to purchase the copyright) or it may be as Asai. But the same reason that existed for giving Asai or Dragon the belt in Tokyo (which I do not know for sure as a fact but I do absolutely believe that Dragon was to have beaten Lizmark for the belt cleanly in Tokyo all along, but that when the split got serious, Alonso immediately stuck the belt on his most closely trusted right hand man, el Satanico, for "safe keeping." As has been reported before, both here and elsewhere, Asai signed the richest contract any foreigner in Mexico has ever signed, and I am sure the EMLL does not intend its money to sit idly or go to waste.

So there we are for the moment. Unless I have added anything in the late news section on page 10, this is all I know as of 6:00 pm CDT Tuesday, May 19, 1992. But the story continues to unfold; there'll be more news next week.

CMLL TELEVISION RUNDOWN: Here are the results from the CMLL television taping held Friday, May 8, 1992, at la Arena Coliseo in Mexico City and broadcast Sunday, May 17, in the USA on Galavision cable:

1) Our opener, the second match of the card at the arena, saw America, el Gran Apache I, and captain el Solar II defeat el Guerrero de la Muerte, el Supremo II, and captain el Supremo I two falls to one in a total elapsed time of (a very long) 22:24. The first fall went an amazing 14:19 (longest fall I have ever seen on any lucha libre show in a two of three fall match) before el Solar II made el Supremo I submit to "la mesadora," a swinging reverse boston crab submission hold. The second fall went 4:28 before el Guerrero de la Muerte pinned America with a diving senton from off of the top rope. The decisive fall went 3:37 before el Saolar II pinned el Supremo I with the infamous "huracarrana." Actually, the finish of the third fall was more interesting than that. The entire finishing sequence after two tecnico dives out of the ring by America and el Gran Apache I was this: a backdrop on el Supremo I by el Solar II, then two dropkicks, then the huracarrana. That is the *exact* same finishing sequence in which Dos Caras defeated Canek on February 2, 1992, to win the UWA World Heavyweight Championship. So the CMLL had two opening-match guys execute the same finish that the UWA saved for its biggest title change in two years. As a match, this was pretty good. It was, to the best of my knowledge, only the second time el Gran Apache I has been on Galavision. He is, next to The Blue Panther and Robin Hood, the youngest "maestro" or trainer in lucha libre. He is very good but unfortunately he tried a rope walk in the first fall, slipped, fell to the floor, and injured his ankle (not severely but enough to hamper his performance). Still, he was fine, and America, who can be charitably called inconsistent, was spectacular. There were several good dives on the show by I thought America's dive right at the end of the third fall was the best. He did an over-the-top-rope dive, or tope, that is Lyger's signature dive, the one with the backflip in mid-air resulting in the diver coming down back- and leg- first onto the opponent. In this dive, America added considerable extra height by being deliberately backflipped over the top rope by partner el Solar II. America came down at a higher angle and with more force than normal. Very impressive. To give el Gran Apache I a chance to go back to the dressing room and have his ankle examined during the first fall, el Solar II and el Supremo I worked a nearly nine minute spot with a series of advantages being traded back and forth that covered up very nicely. Not the greatest match in the world but a very professional effort. ***1/4.

2) Luchadoras took the spotlight in the next match. Tecnicas Xochitl Hamada, Cynthia Moreno, and captain Lady Apache defeated rudas la Tigresa, la Diabolica del Caribe, and captain Martha "la Aplandora" Villalobos two falls to one in a total elapsed time of 15:02. The first fall went 5:31 before Moreno pinned Villalobos with a "rana invertida," a sunset flip that, in order to get Villalobos over on, Moreno needed the help of a double-team lariat from her partners. The second fall went 5:09 before Martha did an off of the second rope diving body press, or splash, onto all three tecnicas (very well done, I might add). The third fall went 4:22 before Apache pinned Villalobos with a jackknife. Again, to help in beating Martha, the "pinner" needed help from her two teammates; in this case, Moreno and Hamada did simultaneous, halfway across the ring, off of the top rope drop kicks onto Villalobos; then Apache rolled her up. The believability in booking this match and the finishes, in particular, was outstanding, considering that Martha dwarfed all three tecnicos (especially Cynthia) and la Tigresa was the second largest woman in the ring. Hamada is really over, due in no small part to the blond dye job in her hair. Apache, I believe, has naturally "dishwater blond" hair and by her features I would guess she is not actually Hispanic. Moreno, all in all, reminds me (looks wise) of Manami Toyota or Suzuka Minami, which I suspect is exactly how Moreno ~~wants~~ to look when she wrestles in Japan. Still, though she is not the best luchadora, Martha Villalobos is clearly the MVP of the ladies' wrestling. Her heel antics, facials, mannerisms, etc., continue to improve; she is vital in her role for the tecnicas to play off. Indeed, were I conducting a "draft" of lady wrestlers to start a promotion in Mexico, she would be my number one pick (then Esther Moreno, then Lady Apache). By the way, for those who don't know this, Lady Apache is the wife of el Gran Apache I from match one on the TV show. I am not sure the last time I saw a card where a husband and wife wrestled on the same card (and neither is a gimmick performer; both are extremely talented and have more talent than their pushes suggest). Many male and female wrestlers in Mexico are married (I know of at least 10 couples) and this is not so unusual in Mexico but I can not think of a similar active couple anywhere else in the world (I am sure there must be one—not counting where the wife is a "valet"—but I can't think of one); the most famous married wrestlers in Mexico today are Fishman and Lola Gonzales. Anyway, as far as "grading" this match, it was really fine, but there were some missed moves and I was not overly impressed with la Tigresa. I give it **3/4, which is not bad at all for a ladies' match in Mexico.

3) The semifinal saw Ringo Mendoza, el Faraon, and captain Ciclon Ramirez defeat el Gran Markus junior, el Angel Blanco junior, and captain el Felino two falls to one in a total elapsed time of 17:17. The first fall went 9:10 before little Ciclon Ramirez (who I estimate at 5'5" 165) pinned el Gran Markus junior (who I estimate at 5'11" 265) with a really nice drop kick from off of the top rope. The second fall saw el Felino (I'd say 5'6" 160) make Ciclon Ramirez submit to the side single leg boston crab submission hold. The third fall went 5:05 before Ciclon Ramirez pinned el Felino clean with the "huracarrana" created in the 1960's by Ciclon's namesake, Huracan Ramirez (Daniel Garcia Arteaga). The point of this match was to set up a feud between Ciclon Ramirez, who is the Mexican National Welterweight Champion, and el Felino. After the match was over, Felino challenged Ramirez to a title match, while

Ramirez challenged Felino to a mask match. I am speculating here but I would guess if we got either match it would be the title match; still, the promotion could take the mask off of el Felino to recognize him as "Baby Casas" and to team him with his brother Canelo. This match saw the reuniting on television of one of Mexico's oldest, most famous, and most successful parejas teams ever in Ringo Mendoza and el Faraon. El Faraon, who is 43, has been off for 18 months since being essentially fired for no-shows and a bad attitude. This was his first TV appearance since then and, a la Bob Backlund, he looks years younger in the face than I remembered. The body is old, though, and though el Faraon clearly tried his heart out, well, he wasn't that good 18 months ago and his slight improvement shown here was not really "statistically significant." Ringo, however, did of all things the biggest dive I have ever seen him do (and this in a match that meant less than nothing). In the third fall he did a beautiful off of the top rope cross body block tope outside the ring, with height and distance to boot. I was stunned. As for the match itself, though everyone else tried, Ramirez and Felino put them to shame with their speed, timing, and technical expertise. I think a feud between the two would be an excellent idea, and they are re-matched on next week's television. Ramirez in particular is underrated (although how can someone be underrated when they have held the National Welterweight Championship for 2 1/2 of the last 3 years?). All in all, ***3/4.

4) The main event saw Saigon Dragon el Ultimo Dragon, Apolo Dantes, and captain Atlantis defeat Kendo Nagasaki, la Fiera, and captain The Blue Panther two falls to one in a total elapsed time of 18:23. Dantes pinned Panther with a surprise Northern Lights Suplex Hold at the 7:06 mark of fall one. Nagasaki pinned Atlantis at 5:09 of round two. The third fall went 6:08 and had an interesting finish. Atlantis put The Blue Panther up in Atlantis's version of the Torture Rack. That hold is one Atlantis always wins with; nobody ever escapes; and the opponents always give up immediately. Well, Atlantis held Blue Panther in it for about six seconds then dropped him onto the mat and started celebrating as if he had won. But, Panther had not submitted! So, Atlantis turned around and Panther fouled him with the forearm to the groin, and referee Roberto "el Guero" Rangel called for the automatic disqualification. I suspect that what actually happened is that Panther "refused to do the job" the way Atlantis and the EMLL wanted, perhaps on orders from Antonio Pena. However, I am not sure, because they issued challenges after the match and, more importantly, The Blue Panther worked an EMLL card in Tijuana on Friday, May 15, 1992, instead of the triple A television tapings in Veracruz; possibly (I don't know), the EMLL may think they can "get Panther back." As for this match, everyone looked fine. La Fiera looked terrible in the face and in the body (he doesn't wear that sweatshirt in the ring for his matches by accident) but in his wrestling this was the best I have seen from him in two years. He did a diving tope (straight diving head butt) over the top rope where he cleared the top rope by six inches or more. Dragon was good but not so spectacular as the week before. Nagasaki was only fair but far far better with this style than any previous time I had seen him (well, look at with whom he was working). The fade-out was the rudos' attacking the tecnicos after the match. Other than the introduction, there were no features: no Notilucha, no Cartometro, no videos, no nothing, just four matches. This one gets ***1/4.

8 (9?) PROMOTIONS COMBINE TO RUN TWO BIG "LUCHA" SHOWS

This past weekend in the southern California areas saw two shows run which may have featured the largest collection of promotions sending representatives to one card ever. Here is a list of the promotions represented and at least one wrestlers they sent:

* FMW: Atushi Onita; * WWA: Ultraman Dos Mil; AWWA: Super Muneco; * AAA: El Hijo del Santo; * UWA: Tinieblas; * WWC: el Gigante Warrior; * Jalisco Promotions: Superstar Junior; * California Independents: Tim Patterson. In Tijuana, you could include either the "IWA" or the "ALLL/Guatemala" promotion as being represented by their world heavyweight champion, Mil Mascaras. There were 4 no-shows: Enrique Vera, The Killer, manager Andy Barrow, and mascot Alushe.

The first of the two shows was run Friday, May 15, 1992, in Tijuana, Baja California Norte, Mexico, at "el Palenque del Hipodromo (Cycling Park)," before a near sellout crowd of 2,000 fans. The EMLL ran opposition at the "Auditorio." Thanks to Steve Gerber, from el Toro, California, here is a list of the action that took place:

1) Junior and el Ultra Taro defeated Genghis Khan and el Caballero Audaz in around 14:00 when Junior pinned Audaz after Taro had given Audaz a super tope outside the ring and then rolled Audaz into the ring for Junior's cover. Said to be the best match of the show, since these four were local Tijuana-based WWA guys who had worked together before. Filled with insane topes. ***. P.S., all matches except the LA main event were one fall.

2) Mister Gannosuke and la Aguila del America I (Bobby Bradley) defeated The Shooter Number One and Akihito Ichihara in around 10:00. The FMW guys "forgot" that in lucha libre parejas matches, both opponents must be pinned to end a match, and it showed when they had to recover nearly a minute after the first pinfall to go to the second pinfall. The finish saw Aguila schoolboy shooter. Aguila has apparently both lost his shape and a lot of "desire." *

3) Super Muneco and el Kamikaze Ninja (Yukihide Ueno) defeated Sanbo Asako and Lazertron (the same one who has been working Mexico City in the last year with that gimmick, but not Hector Guerrero, and not the same mask or

costume as Hector used). I do not have a time for the match, but the finish saw Lazertron disqualified for fouling Ninja. Asako seemed to be lost with the style as the only non-lucha guy in the match. Ninja (or Ueno) has a super future. There was some style clash here and the finish hurt, but still it gets * 1/2.

4) El Rey Misterio, Ultraman Dos Mil (aka el Amigo Ultra), and Eiji Ezaki drew los Mercenarios Americanos (Billy Anderson, Louie "Cutie Pie" Spicoli, and Jesse Hernandez) in around 18:00. The finish was a simultaneous pin as Spicoli pinned Misterio while Ezaki was pinning Hernandez (talk about a size difference). Hernandez was the only Mercenario to wear a mask as Anderson and Spicoli had lost their masks to los Villanos last October. Spicoli was said to look super but Hernandez, sad to say, was not. There was a lot of xenophobic heat for the Mercenarios. In fact, one irate fan threw a full cup of beer at Billy Anderson and hit him flush with the beer, drenching Billy. Good work Billy. **1/2, taken down a little bit for the finish.

5) The FMW ladies wrestled next as Miwa Sato, Megumi Kudo, and Combat Toyoda defeated WWA World Women's Heavyweight Wrestling Champion Eriko Tsuchiya, Yoshika Maedomari, and Yuki Morimatsu in about 14:00 when Sato pinned Morimatsu. Toyoda, with her ever-increasing weight and fright-wig-like red hair, now does a Bull Nakano-like "superwoman" routine. Kudo comes out now in an elaborate pink prom dress to every match. The fans seemed to like it and while these aren't the All Japan women, they aren't at all bad. There were some missed moves, which is a bit surprising since this six have worked with each other for two years solid now. **1/4.

6) The semifinal had Tinieblas I, el Hijo de Tinieblas, and Ricky Fuji defeating Tim Patterson (not billed as The Centurion), el Caballon, and Horace Boulder in 8:00. The finish saw el Hijo de Tinieblas pin both Patterson and Caballon with a Mil-Mascaras-style off of the top rope flying cross body block. This had more brawling than the previous matches but not so much as the main event would feature. For his age (53) Tinieblas I looked okay, and el Hijo de Tinieblas is still, as he improves and with his size, sure to be a big star someday. In a major disappointment, Alushe was not there. **.

7) The main event found Atsushi Onita, Mil Mascaras, and el Hijo del Santo defeating Jose "el Negro" Casas, Tarzan Goto, and el Gigante Warrior (aka "Blade" Butch Masters) in 16:00. Onita DDTed Warrior; then, realizing they hadn't got the second finish, Mascaras and Casas re-entered the fray and Mil made Negro submit clean with a half nelson submission hold. Goto and Onita bled fast and hard (particularly Goto though Onita openly sliced himself several times in several places). It was all brawl and intense too. Well, Santo and Casas did do some lucha high spots. The fans got into it a lot. Still, there was some style clash and the second finish looked bad. **3/4.

The next night (5/16) at the gym at Cal State-Los Angeles, maybe 2,800 out of the 3,000 available seats were sold for the US card. Thanks to Dan Farren, here's what happened:

1) From Jalisco Promotions, el Piloto Suicida and Superstar junior (aka Super Boy) defeated la Estampa Brava and el CHamaco Rebelde one fall to zero via double count out of the ring (after big topes suicidas by the winners). The local boys were nervous at the start, but the crowd was on fire; after a slow start they turned it on and how much the four have worked together really showed as they put on a hell of a match. ****.

2) La Aguila del America I (Bobby Bradley again) pinned Akihito Ichihara with the german suplex hold. Ichihara now does a Shinya Hashimoto routine both in attire and mannerisms (not in charisma). Worst match of the night. **.

3) Los Mercenarios Americanos (same three as in Tijuana) defeated Eiji Ezaki, el Ultra Taro, and Mister Gannosuke when Mercenario Louie pinned Gannosuke with a big splash. The high point (or low point may be more like it) was when el Ultra Taro went to the top rope to do a quebrada (moonsault bodyblock outside of the ring) onto Mercenario Jesse, but Jesse moved, and Taro hit nothing but air until he hit the ground full force. The local gringo fans were all over Jesse for moving out of the way on that one. Still, a good match. ***.

4) Super Muneco, el Ultra Tiger, and Ultraman Dos Mil (aka el Amigo Ultra) defeated Bull Raiders (who absolutely was el Ray Misterio, as had been suspected all along), Genghis Khan, and The Shooter Number One. There was lots of mask ripping here and they may be setting up a mask match down the line as they announced a return date (without the FMW guys) to the same arena for May 31, 1992, which should sell out the 3,000 seats no problem. Lots of challenges issued after this match. Finish saw Muneco, who threw out his trademark suckers before the match, pinned Genghis Khan (sorry, not sure how). ***.

5) Miwa Sato, Megumi Kudo, and Yuki Morimatsu defeated Combat Toyoda, Yoshika Maedomari, and Eriko Tsuchiya when Sato pinned Maedomari with the fisherman's suplex hold. Sato was beaten like a rag doll, particularly by Toyoda, for most of this match. By the way, Sato's team in this match are the three senior babyface women for FMW and Toyoda's team represents the three senior heels. The Tijuana match was more of a "mixed" match in that regard. This got over surprisingly well. ****.

6) Ricky Fuji, Tinieblas I, and el Hijo de Tinieblas (without Alushe) defeated Mando Guerrero, Sanbo Asako, and el Gigante Warrior in an all-out brawl via disqualification when Warrior accidentally splashed referee Sergio Garcia, who's

also the promoter. Garcia is a legit referee, and he is famous, a la el Fresero in the UWA, for diving over the wrestlers to count the fall if he has somehow been caught "out of position." Garcia got over great all night long. Not bad at all and great heat. *** 1/2

7) The main event saw Atsushi Onita, Tarzan Goto, and el Hijo del Santo win two out of three falls from Jose "el Negro" Casas, Horace Boulder, and Tim Patterson. I wish I could type a report that would give justice to the report that Dan Farren gave me, a report backed up by Kurt Brown in a conversation I had with him, and by Gabriel Daigle and his brother via a second-hand conversation with Steve Gerber. The match grade was *****. Dan Farren said in his twenty plus years of watching wrestling that it was the single greatest match he has ever seen. The heat was said to have been incredible from all crowd factions (apparently there were 85-90% Hispanic, 2% gringo, and the rest Asian in the crowd makeup). Onita took Boulder into the top bleachers and then tossed him over the rail (six feet or so) down to the next level. Need I say that there was blood everywhere except for Casas and Santo. Those two were basically left alone in the ring to do every high spot they could think of. The first fall saw Goto pin Boulder with the jumping face buster. The second fall saw Casas pin Santo with "la magisterial" or el Dandy's "Dandina" cradle if you prefer that name, after Santo missed a diving head butt tope from off of the top rope. Onita got the pin in the third fall by giving Boulder the Thunder Fire Power Bomb. Boulder legit goes 6'5" and Patterson 6'4" while Santo and Casas are 5'5" or 5'6" which is quite a shock to see. Boulder is said to look eerily like Hulk Hogan up close. Blood, chairs, dives, wrestling, this match had it all. It was taped for commercial release in Japan and there was a hand-held camera at ringside also. I wasn't there but having seen Onita matches on tape, I would think it would be like attending one's first war games live, that to see the unique match Onita puts on (and he does have only the one basic match) is a mind-blowing experience, and one that is far better live than on television. Here is a case where no camera or director could possibly follow all the action amongst the six wrestlers, so it may lack something on tape, but I don't doubt the five star grade live one bit; I am sure it was more than a match, it was an event, and I'll bet a really small intense crowd of nearly 3,000 is about the *perfect* size for seeing this action. I imagine this match would not translate as well to 20,000 or more fans (so you add barbed wire or explosives or fire or something if you are Onita). Wish I had gone; I'll bet you do too. The only "negative" about the card that I heard was the lack of a souvenir stand. Some guys did get backstage and asked Negro Casas directly, face-to-face, about the split, and he said, and I quote, "I wrestle always for Lucha Libre Internacional." The guys who talked to him, taking all his answers in context and seeing his eyes and facial expressions, concluded that Casas was merely playing it close to the vest and not revealing his future plans. "Lucha Libre Internacional" is the corporate name of the UWA. I would be willing to hazard this guess: Casas is wanted by all three promotions and can afford to sit back and see who offers him the best deal. I also think that as far as timing goes, the time for Casas to make the best deal is now while the Triple A is new, so I expect that whatever happens, it will happen soon (within 6-8 weeks or less).

UWA TELEVISION RUNDOWN: I recently received a tape, thanks to Greg Goode, of very current UWA television tapings. They cover the shows broadcast 3/21/92, 4/4/92, 4/25/92, and 5/2/92. Due to the extraordinary amount of things going on this weekend, I will review the most current two shows this week and the two earlier ones next week. However, here is what is on the two earlier shows. If you want to discuss tape trading with me for these shows, feel free to call or write.

1) Show broadcast 3/21, taped 3/13: 1) Jose "el Negro" Casas and el Espanto junior defeated Super Pinochio and el Halcon 78 two falls to one in a total elapsed time of 18:55. 2) El Sicodelico and Enrique Vera defeated The Killer and The American Eagle I two falls to one in a total elapsed time of 12:37. 3) Mil Mascaras, Canek, and el Villano III defeated The Can-Am Express I y II and Bufalo Allen two falls to one in a total elapsed time of 10:49. 4) Highlights of el Celestial winning two straight falls from el Sismo. 5) There were interviews with Mil Mascaras and Bufalo Allen.

2) Show broadcast 4/4, taped 3/25: 1) Silver King and el Texano defeated el Indomito and el Engendro two falls to one in a total elapsed time of 18:21. 2) Dos Caras, Enrique Vera, and el Villano III defeated Bull Pain, Rambo, and el Gigante Warriro two falls to one in a total elapsed time of 12:01. 3) Los Villanos I, IV, and V won a non-title match over el Signo, Miguel "el Negro" Navarro, and The Black Power II two falls to one in a total elapsed time of 13:34. 4) Highlights of Korak and el Vagabundo defeating Ricky Boy and el Angel Mortal in three falls. 5) Interviews aired during the show with Lasser, el Engendro, and el Villano I.

3) The first show to review is the one broadcast Saturday, April 25, 1992, in Mexico City on Imevision (channel 13) and taped Friday, April 17, 1992, at la Arena Netzahualcoyotl in the Mexico City suburb of the same name (I know that's a long name but if it were its own city instead of a suburb, Netzahualcoyotl would be Mexico's fourth most populous city.) The first match featured Fishman, Doctor Wagner junior, and The Killer (managed by Andy Barrow) and they defeated el Villano IV, Enrique Vera, and el Fantasma two falls to one in a total elapsed time of 15:28. The first fall went to los tecnicos in 6:52 when el Villano IV pinned The Killer with a regular rana. The second fall went 3:43 before Wagner pinned el Villano IV with a simple body drop. The final fall went 3:53 before Fishman pinned el Villano IV with the legendary Fishman senton. The Killer (and Barrow) looked the best here, though el Fantasma, sporting new tights, looked real good, and especially so considering his age. It was more than just going through the motions

but it was not much more than that. * 1/2 Between matches we had lengthy interviews with Fray Tormenta, plus some clips of him in a late 1991 match against el Engendro, Black Terry, and Jose Luis Feliciano. He looked better than usual (still not great) in the ring but the interview piece was very well put together. The semifinal of our television show had a non-title match between the World Parejas Champions of three federations (UWA, WWA, and Japan UWF) los Cowboys (Silver King and el Texano) as they went up against los Cazadores del Cabezas I y II (or, The Head Hunters A and B). This was one of the rare UWA matches, on television or otherwise, to use blood, as the Head Hunters used foreign objects to bust King and Texano open in the first fall. The fall ended in 3:27 when one Head Hunter pinned King with a lariat and the other pinned Texano with a splash. The second fall went 2:15 before King pinned one Hunter with a sunset flip, aided by an el Texano lariat. During this fall, Silver King got a chain away from one Head Hunter and busted him open. The other Head Hunter never did bleed. The deciding fall went 4:21 (so the match went 10:03) as one Hunter did a beautiful powerful moonsault press onto Texano; this was after Texano had accidentally dropkicked King from off of the top rope, causing King to be pinned. This match set up the parejas title match they had seven days later, which los Cowboys won, and was done very well. If the Head Hunters wrestle with this much effort in Charleston June 16, they'll get over great, and so will that moonsault press. All brawl with few double-team or lucha moves. More heat from the crowd for this than anything they've had on in months. Not great but not at all bad and recommended. *** 1/2 The main event could hardly follow, and it didn't. Bam Bam Bigelow, Rambo, and el Signo defeated Canek, el Villano III, and el Villano V in three falls in a total elapsed time of 16:36. Los rudos won the first fall in 4:32 of total domination when Bigelow pinned Canek after a press power body slam. Los tecnicos came back at 5:41 of the second fall as Rambo dove onto el Signo by mistake and the tecnicos covered both for the pin. The third fall went 8:25 before el Villano V pinned el Signo with a fair "huracarrana." Most of this match was kept with natural foes fighting each other. El Villano V had taken away el Signo's biggest world title ever and el Villano III had done the same to Rambo (The WWF Light Heavyweight Title in 1989). Meanwhile, Canek was trying to run out another foreigner. He and Bigelow worked well together and Bam Bam sells great. Canek is clearly stretching out his program with Bigelow as they kept the offense even and indecisive the majority of the time. Canek sure knows how to promote Canek; he sure can get *him* over great. **.

4) The final UWA TV show to cover is the most recent I have. The UWA returned its cameras to el Toreo de Cuatro Caminos in suburban Naucalpan in the state of Mexico on April 26, 1992, for a card that was broadcast May 2nd. The intro introduced a temporary new announcer, el Principe Valiente, who took Alcatraz's place for two weeks. While they were introducing him, in the background, the opening match was underway. El Ninja Sasuke ("Masa Michinoku" in Japan) was doing a beautiful quebrada (moonsault bodyblock) outside the ring onto his opponent, el Angel Mortal. Too bad that was background. In the EMLL they would be highlighting that action; in the UWA it's just "the little names in the first match." On to the TV opener, which featured los Nuevos Misioneros de la Muerte again (el Signo, The Black Power II, and Miguel "el Negro" Navarro). They won this non-title match over el Villano I, el Villano IV, and el Coloso in three falls in 15:27. The first fall went 6:51 before Navarro made Coloso submit to the bat hanging hold. The second went 6:18 before el Villano IV pinned el Signo with the "huracarrana." The Villanos do the worst huracarranas, too; I wish they'd get a new hold. The final fall went 4:18 before we saw a really cool finisher, as el Signo made el Villano I submit to "el nudo," the old "Signo Special" stretch submission hold. Frankly, I don't care if I ever see los Misioneros and los Villanos against each other again. I have seen every spot they have with each other a dozen times. Plus los Villanos just aren't very good and are not at the Misioneros' level. What's really sad is that it was the best match on the show. **. The semifinal saw Silver King, el Texano, and el Tigre Canadiense (Mike Lozansky) defeated The Head Hunters and Doctor Wagner junior in three falls in 14:55. This was pretty bad, which is amazing considering who was in there. But not only did the action stink but whoever called this match ought to be shot. The majority of Silver King's time in there was spent feuding with his acknowledged brother Doctor Wagner junior. But in the third fall, when it came time to turn up the heat, King started trying to unmask Wagner. Not rip his mask up and symbolically humiliate him but just reveal his identity. Why, I ask you, why? Did Silver King want to see what his brother looked like without the mask? Couldn't he have just waited until Thanksgiving? Then, by accident, King did pull off his brother's mask (Wagner looks just like King in the face only fatter and with longer hair) right in front of referee el Bucles, who looked away rather than call for the DQ. Meanwhile, the Head Hunters, who get fatter by the hour, wear totally into their Abdualh shtick, even introducing the pointy boots this week. And the finish was cheap too, as after a very obvious set-up, ref el Fresero was trapped in the corner trying to separate a brawling King and Wagner and one of the Head Hunters did a running tackle into the corner; naturally, King moved and the ref got sandwiched. Poor Texano, he tried so hard here, too. *. The main event was even worse, though it gets a higher grade because the script was well thought-out and well-performed. Canek and los Villanos III and V defeated Bam Bam Bigelow, Rambo, and Andree el Gigante (making his UWA TV debut) in two straight falls in 14:45. Bigelow was DQed at 11:01 of the first fall for suplexing Canek so that Canek was crotched on the top rope. The second fall saw all three Mexicans pin Bigelow after an irate Andree turned face on Bigelow and gave him the worst of many bad "elbow drops" that I have seen Andree do. The script of Andree turning face on Bigelow after tag-team-communication difficulties was super though, so all in all * 1/2. Canek and especially Rambo tried hard to make this a match. Los Villanos were the same as ever. The Triple A is only one week old and already I am more excited about getting its tapes and seeing its action than I feel toward the UWA. Sad to say but it appears these guys are completely bankrupt of ideas of what to do to turn things around. They have not improved lately one iota.

LATE NEWS: I am sad to announce the passing away of legendary Mexican luchador Rene "Copetes" Guajardo within the past week. He was given a ten-count at the Saturday LA WWA show. Guajardo was born January 4, 1933, in Villa Mainero, Tamaulipas, Mexico, and debuted in 1949 at the age of 16. Oddly enough, he did not win his first world championship (the NWA World Middleweight Championship) until 1965; that's a long time after a debut for a star to rise. He ended up holding that title on five separate occasions, finally losing it in 1974 to British wrestler Steve Wright. He had a famous "shooter" rep and as such was paired with Karloff Lagarde (supposedly the second toughest wrestler of his day although you know how those stories go) and they held parejas championships in the 1960s. They split twice. In 1959 they had a brief singles feud but it ended in a bizarre fashion as on March 4, 1960, in a singles match in Mexico City, a drunk fan climbed in the ring and knocked both men out with a beer bottle. I have no idea if it was a work or not, but it is a famous match in Mexico. Guajardo was a heel here and during the early 1960s teamed more with Mario Prado than anyone else; then along came singles success as a middleweight. Guajardo and Lagarde re-formed their team but split again in 1968 and Guajardo beat Lagarde in the blow-off to their singles feud. Guajardo won the National Middleweight title from Alberto Munoz in 1969 but already was getting old and was said to have wanted to get into the promotional side of things (as did Lagarde.) In October 1974, Guajardo and Lagarde met with Rey Mendoza, Francisco Flores, Anibal, and Benjamin Mora senior and outlined a plan to split off from the Lutherroth-controlled EMLL, which had clearly decided it was time to promote younger stars and plan for the future. The UWA was born January 16, 1975, and promoted its first card 13 days later at el Toreo. I have no record of Guajardo's wrestling for the UWA but he probably worked the occasional show for some time.

Box y Lucha in its May 1st issue reported that Guajardo was ill and he passed away from complications resulting from liver cancer. Q.E.P.D...**QUICKLY**, here are the results from this past Sunday, May 17, 1992. First, the EMLL ran its usual Sunday afternoon card at la Arena Coliseo. I have the results of the two main matches. In the semifinal, la Plaga del Ring (Enjambre, Marabunta, and captain Ponzoona) scored their biggest victory as a trio in their 13-month history (and it's not much of a victory at that) by defeating Rokambole (who is legit a licensed M. D.), el Solar II, and captain Kato Kung Lee 1 two falls to one. The main event seemed hardly more exciting. There, a real mismatched pair of trios met. Tecnicos el Hijo del Solitario (still a tecnico though I still think they plan to turn him), el Jalisco, and Ringo Mendoza won two out of three falls from M. S. 1, el Egipcio, and Ulises Plus. Ulises Plus, who changed his ring name from just plain Ulises two weeks ago so he could stay with the EMLL, lost the first fall for his squad, the newspaper **La Prensa** reported, but I don't know in what fashion. Ulises Plus came back in the second and pinned el Hijo del Solitario with a senton. The third fall was said to be pretty good with Mendoza and Egipcio starting a mini-feud, resulting in Ringo's pinning Egipcio clean with a "desnuncadora." To correct one mistake I have often made, Ulises was not the first character where Antonio Pena took an old time wrestler and put a new mask and gimmick on him. Ulises (Tony Salazar) was the *second*. The first was el Espectro de Ultratumba, who before that had been el Gran Cochisse. Thanks to **Box y Lucha** for correcting me...**AT** el Toreo de Cuatro Caminos in suburban Naucalpan, the UWA held its regular Sunday afternoon card on May 17th. The main event, which for the third straight week was reported as Andree el Gigante's last match on this tour at el Toreo, saw Andree team with babyface rudo Canek and babyface tecnico el Villano III to defeat the "extranjero" team of The Black Scorpio (Charles Skaggs from Denver, aka The Flying Scorpio in Japan), Bufalo Allen (Allen Coage aka Bad News Allen aka Bad News Brown), and "la Bestia Hawaiana" Kokina (who is a Samoan from San Francisco claiming to be a Hawaiian). As with all of Andree's matches on his tour in the past month, this was over in two straight falls. I presume that is to limit both Andree's time spent in the ring (for his health) and so that fans won't see so much of him in one match that they realize how terrible he is (for our mental health). At the end of the match, to change focus and give Canek a new feud partner, Canek and el Villano III came to blows and had to be separated. Canek will be heavily cheered by the remaining UWA faithful in that feud and this may be the beginning of a much rumored turn to rudos for all four Villanos. The semifinal saw Jose "el Negro" Casas, who had a rough travel schedule this weekend, team with Fishman and The Killer (managed by Andy Barrow) to defeat Enrique Vera, el Coloso, and Haroki "el Gran" Hamada in three falls in a match that was said to be pretty bad with especially poor work by the tecnicos. The tercera had las Panteras Rosas (los Villanos I, IV, and V) defeating Rambo and los Cazadores del Cabezas I y II (The Head Hunters A and B) in three falls. I do not have results from the opener but the segunda saw an eight-man tag. The winners were Shu, el Guerrero (who hasn't jumped from the UWA yet but is very likely to soon), el Engendro, el Lobo Rubio, and el Espanto junior defeat in three falls los Tortugillos Karatekas I, II, III, and IV (Donatelo, Leonardo, Miguel Angel, and Rafael)...**AND** speaking of el Espanto junior, and saving the best for last, he defeated el Hijo del Santo within the last week (as reported in **La Prensa**) to win the UWA World Welterweight Championship. Based on the booking sheets I have, I believe (but do not know for certain) that the date of the change was Wednesday, May 12, 1992, and the place la Arena Apatlaco in Mexico City (I will know for sure next week). This is historic news because every belt el Hijo del Santo has ever won, he has vacated by going up in weight class, rather than do a job and lose the belt in the ring. This is the first time. And to think he did this but none of the ex-EMLL boys will! El Espanto junior had been feuding with Santo over the belt and had lost two title matches this year, but I think the biggest reason it was he who won the belt was as an enticement to delay el Espanto's (and his friend Negro Casas's) rumored jump to the AAA. **NO** other news on the split as of 5/19. I edited a lot of stuff out this time. Next week will be equally full. Bye.

CHAMPIONS IN MEXICO AS OF MAY 19, 1992:

CMLL: Heavyweight: CIEN CARAS; Light Heavyweight: PIERROTH JUNIOR; Middleweight: THE BLUE PANTHER; Welterweight: AMERICA; Super-Mini-Estrellas: LA MASCARITA SAGRADA; Trios: LOS INTOCABLES DEL RING (Pierroth junior, Jaque Mate, and Masakre)

NWA: Light Heavyweight: EL SATANICO; Middleweight: ATLANTIS; Welterweight: EL MISTERIOSO

UWA: Heavyweight: DOS CARAS; Junior Heavyweight: THE KILLER (managed by Andy Barrow); Light Heavyweight: EL VILLANO V; Junior Light Heavyweight: vacant; Middleweight: JOSE "EL NEGRO" CASAS; Welterweight: EL ESPANTO JUNIOR; Lightweight: LASSER; Parejas: LOS COWBOYS (Silver King and el Texano); Trios: LOS NUEVOS MISIONEROS DE LA MUERTE (The Black Power II, Miguel "el Negro" Navarro, and el Signo); Women: ZULYEMA; Women's Junior: CUTIE SUZUKI; Women's Parejas: MANAMI TOYOTA and TOSHIYO YAMADA

WWA: Heavyweight: MIL MASCARAS; Junior Heavyweight: LIZMARK; Light Heavyweight: EL VILLANO IV; Middleweight: vacant; Welterweight: vacant; Lightweight: EL HIJO DE BLACK SHADOW; Parejas: LOS COWBOYS (el Texano and Silver King); Trios: KISS, LA AGUILA DEL AMERICA, & ULTRAMAN DOS MIL; Women's: LA MONSTHER

NATIONAL: Heavyweight: EL EGIPCIO; Crusierweight: EL DESTRUCTOR DE IDOLOS; Light Heavyweight: LA MASCARA SAGRADA; Middleweight: OCTAGON; Welterweight: CICLON RAMIREZ; Lightweight: FLASH; Featherweight: EL VIENTO NEGRO; Parejas: EL MISTERIOSO and EL VOLADOR; Trios: LOS HERMANOS DINAMITA (Cien Caras, Mascara Ano Dos Mil, and Universo Dos Mil); Women's: NEFTALI; Women's Parejas: MARTHA "LA APLANDORA" VILLALOBOS and LA PANTERA SURENA

OTHER TITLES: IWA Heavyweight: MIL MASCARAS; ALLL Heavyweight: MIL MASCARAS; LAWA Heavyweight: KONNAN EL BARBARO; Distrito Federal Light Heavyweight: EL PRINCIPE ISLAND; WWF Light Heavyweight: THE PEGASUS KID; Distrito Federal Women's: SELENE; La Arena Azteca Women's: SELENE; WWF Women's: BRANDI MAE; UWA/UWF Super Middleweight: ATOMO (aka Robin Hood); WWF Intercontinental Parejas: LOS COWBOYS (Silver King and el Texano); UWA Intercontinental Parejas: AKIYOSHI and TAKAYAMA (aka Punish and Crush); State of Mexico Trios: EL TRIO METALICO (Oro, Plata, and Bronze)

MAY RATINGS:

(Full-time Mexico only, based on in-ring record, push, drawing power, and work rate)

HEAVIER WEIGHTS (Heavyweight, Crusierweight, LightHeavyweight, Junior Heavyweight, and Junior Light Heavyweight): 1) CANEK; 2) MIL MASCARAS; 3) CASANOVA EL VAMPIRO CANADIENSE; 4) PIERROTH JUNIOR; 5) EL SATANICO; 6) THE PEGASUS KID; 7) THE KILLER; 8) EL RAYO DE JALISCO JUNIOR; 9) KONNAN EL BARBARO; 10) DOS CARAS; 11) DOCTOR WAGNER JUNIOR; 12) EL VILLANO III; 13) EL VILLANO V; 14) LA MASCARA SAGRADA; 15) LIZMARK; 16) CIEN CARAS; 17) JERRY ESTRADA; 18) ENRIQUE VERA; 19) THE BLACK POWER II; 20) EL BRAZO DE PLATA

LIGHTER WEIGHTS (Middleweight, Welterweight, Lightweight, Featherweight): 1) SAIGON DRAGON EL ULTIMO DRAGON; 2) JOSE "EL NEGRO" CASAS; 3) LA BESTIA SALVAJE; 4) OCTAGON; 5) ATLANTIS; 6) LASSER; 7) ORO; 8) SILVER KING; 9) EMILIO CHARLES JUNIOR; 10) THE BLUE PANTHER; 11) FUERZA GUERRERA; 12) CICLON RAMIREZ; 13) PIMPINELA ESCARLATA; 14) EL MISTERIOSO; 15) EL HIJO DEL SANTO; 16) EL ANGEL AZTECA; 17) EL VOLADOR; 18) ERICK "EL CANELO" CASAS; 19) EL GUERRERO MAYA (aka BLACK TERRY); 20) EL TEXANO (P. S. I could go on and on at the lower weights; if I were to rank the top 25 over all 20 would be from the lighter weights, 5 from the heavier, and only Canek would be in the top 10—though he would be number 1.)

WOMEN: 1) CYNTHIA MORENO; 2) MARTHA "LA APLANDORA" VILLALOBOS; 3) LADY APACHE; 4) XOCHITL HAMADA; 5) LA DIABOLICA; 6) SELENE; 7) LOLA "DINAMITA" GONZALES; 8) LA PANTERA SURENA; 9) LA SIRENITA; 10) MITSUKI WONG

SUPER-MINI-ESTRELLAS: 1) LA MASCARITA SAGRADA; 2) OCTAGONCITO; 3) JERRITO ESTRADA; 4) LA AGUILITA SOLITARIA; 5) EL PIRATITA MORGAN; 6) EL ESPECTRITO (JUNIOR); 7) EL VOLADORCITO; 8) EL MISTERIOCITO; 9) EL PEQUENO PIERROTH; 10) EL PEQUENO COBARDE

PAJEAS: 1) LOS COWBOYS; 2) EL ESPANTO JUNIOR AND JOSE "EL NEGRO" CASAS; 3) LOS DESTRUCTORES; 4) ORO AND PLATA; 5) LOS TINIEBLAS; 6) LOS CAVERNICOLAS; 7) LOS ESPECTROS; 8) LOS SUPREMOS; 9) EL MISTERIOSO AND EL VOLADOR; 10) KOGA AND IGA

TRIOS: 1) LOS BRAZOS; 2) LOS INTOCABLES DEL RING; 3) LOS NUEVOS INFERNALIS; 4) EL TRIO METALICO; 5) LOS DESTRUCTORES DEL RING; 6) LOS ASESINOS DEL RING; 7) LOS MISIONEROS DE LA MUERTE; 8) LOS VILLANOS; 9) LA OLA LILA; 9) LOS HERMANOS DINAMITA; 10) LOS GUERREROS DEL ESPACIO

MINI-BIOGRAPHY: EL RAYO DE JALISCO JUNIOR: The son of Maximino Linares, the original Rayo de Jalisco, Rayo junior was born January 2nd, 1960, in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico. Some sources give it as January 20th, but my source for the birthday being the 2nd is *Box y Lucha* which I trust most. Rayo junior has been a big star both in Mexico City and in the interior of Mexico. He is one of the top few wrestlers ever in number of *mascara contra mascara* matches won, with 37. Considerably taller than his father, by at least a foot, Rayo junior is billed as being 180 cm tall (5'11") which I think is a little short, and weighing 97 kg (212 pounds), and that's a little short too. Trained first by his father, then by legendary Guadalupean trainer "el Diablo Velazco," Rayo junior debuted on informal cards in November 1976 and formally on January 20, 1979 in Guadalajara. It did not take him long to rise to the top in Mexico. In September 1983, at the 50th anniversary of lucha libre card at la Arena Mexico, Rayo junior won the mask of el Egipto (Jose Luis Hernandez) in the main event. Then, on January 8, 1984, at la Arena Coliseo, Rayo junior defeated el Pirata Morgan to win his first National Heavyweight Championship. Though he lost that title soon thereafter, bigger prizes were to come. On June 21, 1985, at la Arena Mexico, Rayo junior defeated M. S. 1 (Pablo Fuentes Reyna) to win the NWA World Light Heavyweight Title, at that time the top singles prize in the EMLL. He held that belt for 21 months before finally dropping it back to M. S. 1 on March 20, 1987, again at la Arena Mexico. Over the next few years, Rayo junior was essentially the EMLL's top heavier-weight limpio. He held the National Parejas and National Trios championships during the late 1980s. His fame grew such that he headlined the 57th lucha libre anniversary card at la Arena Mexico, winning the mask of Cien Caras (Carmelo Reyes Gonzales) on September 21, 1990, before a literally-overflow crowd of 23,000+. On October 17, 1990, Rayo junior defeated el Gran Markus junior at la Arena Coliseo de Acapulco in Acapulco, Guerrero, Mexico, to begin his second National Heavyweight Championship reign. This reign was almost as short as his first, as Rayo dropped the title (see how everything's a circle that comes around in the end?) to el Egipto (who is still the champ today) in a match held Saturday, April 13, 1991, at la Arena Puebla in Puebla, Puebla, Mexico. With his size and relative dependability (Rayo junior only occasionally no-shows) he will no doubt be a big force (no pun intended) in the near future CMLL plans, and would be probably the most likely candidate to replace the departing Cien Caras as next CMLL World Heavyweight Champion. Rayo junior has put over Cien twice in the last six months and it's probably "Rayo's turn to win" anyway, even if Cien weren't leaving. With Cien Caras, Mascara Ano Dos Mil, Universo Dos Mil, and even Konnan el Barbaro going to the AAA, the CMLL is very short on heavyweights (look for them to bring in los Tinieblas soon) but Rayo junior will need a new feud soon, as the only one he's got left in the EMLL would be with el Egipto, or, really going back, with M. S. 1.

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c/o STEPHEN H. SIMS

1427 WEST DICKENS AVENUE

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60614-3003

(312) 477-3996



TO:

R. SCOTT HOUSTEN

1726 HEATHERWOOD WAY

P. O. BOX 249

WEST FRIENDSHIP, MD

21974-0249